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WORKS OF THE GREAT MASTERS.



JACOB JORDAENS.

TOWARDS the end of the sixteenth century, Flanders saw arise a generation of bold and vigorous painters, who, stamped with



the mark of national genius, were destined to restore its Flemish appearance to Flemish art. For nearly a hundred

years past, there had existed no national school of painting in the country of the great artist who had invented oil painting! While the Breughels, a family of unaffected and intelligent peasants, were executing, under the guidance of nature, singular pictures, that were, doubtless, despised by the ambitious votaries of the ultra-montane style, a fantastic and violent man, Adam Van Oort, was revelling in all the caprices of his own imagination, without, in the least, troubling himself about foreign importations, or even thinking of Italy,—that country to which his rivals thought it obligatory on them to undertake a pilgrimage, as their predecessors had thought before them. Passing his existence in the midst of gaiety, and in the atmosphere of taverns, his original style, which is as impetuous and disorderly as was his mode of living, formed a strong contrast with the cold style of those who only imitated. It is not astonishing, therefore, that his studio was filled with an enthusiastic crowd of young artists, though the Italianized Fleming, Otho Venius, had also opened a school.

When Jacob Jordaens became the pupil of Van Oort, Rubens and Van Balen had already left him. Born on the 20th of May, 1593, a few years after Rubens, and a few before Quellinus and David Teniers the young, Jordaens, who was the son of a linen-draper, contributed more than any one else to the resuscitation of Flemish art.

Jordaens at once felt at his ease in the studio of Adam Van Oort. The young artist liked the rough manners of the old master, whose studio, however, possessed a greater attraction

for Jordaens than that afforded by the fine arts. Love, which plays so important a part in the life of every artist, had attached him to Catherine, the daughter of Van Oort; and while the latter was spending his time at the tavern, the beautiful Catherine used to be engaged in conversation with Jordaens—and at last they were married.

Rubens was now at the height of his glory, and Jordaens entered his studio as a pupil, without, however leaving Van Oort, but studied under both masters at the same time. He made copies of the warm and vigorous paintings brought by Rubens from Venice, and soon became a consummate artist. At the age of five-and-twenty, he assisted Rubens in the execution of the series of allegorical pictures painted for Marie de Médicis, and finished at Antwerp in 1623. It is more than probable that he also went to France with Van Thulden, Van Hoeck, Van Uden, and several other disciples of Rubens, some of whose works are still to be seen in the chamber of the *Livre d'Or*, at the Luxembourg, in Paris. The twelve signs of the zodiac, placed in the upper part of the vaulted ceiling of the first chamber of the modern museum, on each side of the "Rising of Aurora," which Callet painted afterwards, in the centre of the gallery, are by Jordaens.

But Antwerp was best suited to the ardent genius of Jordaens, whom no painter, not excepting even Rubens, equals in fire and exuberance. If Rubens, in his bacchanalian pieces, is the painter of Bacchus and sensual Nymphs, Jordaens is the painter of Silenus and Satyrs. If Rubens were not the creator and the incarnation of the Flemish style, Jordaens would have been equal to the task of inventing that rich, fleshy manner of painting, so full of muscle and vitality, which owes its origin to Rubens; for it cannot with justice be said that Jordaens ever imitated Rubens. They belonged to the same family, and were endowed with the same temperament. The latter is the more accomplished, the more pensive, and more profound of the two, while the former is generally the more uncouth and coarse; but when he restrains his conception and tempers his execution, he resembles his master, while Rubens, when he gives vent to his passion and begins to roar, might be taken for Jordaens. There exist paintings by Jordaens which are attributed to Rubens, and there are others by the latter which are attributed to the former. Rubens holds the middle place between Jordaens and Van Dyck. Rubens is gold, Van Dyck silver, and Jordaens fire and blood. But all three have sometimes alike run through the same gamut of colour. The refined and delicate Van Dyck, for instance, has even gone so far as to employ the red colouring of Jordaens in a "Silenus supported by Satyrs," now in the Brussels Museum; and Rubens has done the same thing in a picture of the same museum—a "St. Lieven," in which the executioner is tearing out the tongue of the saint in the midst of a glory of angels, who have come down from heaven to offer him the palm of martyrdom.

Rubens is said to have early employed our painter, and it is not likely that the discerning eye of the master would overlook the talent of the pupil. "The king of Spain," says Bryan, "had applied to Rubens for a series of cartoons to be executed in tapestry, who engaged Jordaens to paint them from his designs, and aided him with his assistance and advice; affording him, in this undertaking, a mark of distinction which could not fail of being very advantageous to a young artist. Sandrart, with more malevolence than veracity, charges Rubens with having employed Jordaens in this enterprise, from a jealousy of his promise as a colourist; hoping, that by painting these great works in distemper, he might insensibly lose the vigour and brilliancy which he had already discovered in his oil pictures; and very inconsiderately asserts, that the colouring of Jordaens, after painting the cartoons, became feeble and cold. Fortunately for the purposes of truth, and in justice to the well-known beneficence of Rubens, this calumny is refuted by facts, of which that writer was either ignorant or insensible. The cartoons were painted when Jordaens was young; and so far from his colouring having been deteriorated by that operation, it became from thence infinitely more rich and harmonious, as is evident in

the pictures he afterwards painted, on which his reputation is principally founded, and which are in no way inferior, in respect to colour, to the best works of Rubens.

Jordaens, however, goes much beyond Rubens in force and colouring and fulness of style. His paintings glare, dazzle, and blaze. His personages, too, display the most incomparable prosperity. No pale, emaciated women were ever seen on his canvas, which is always occupied by plump matrons of lofty stature, with their veins full of purple blood. It must be acknowledged, nevertheless, that notwithstanding the opportunities which Jordaens possessed of studying from good models, and thus refining his taste from the examples of the good masters of Italy, his Flemish style prevailed; though could he have been a little more correct in his composition, more elegant in his characters, and more elevated in his invention, he might have been ranked with the most eminent in his art. Rubens himself, however, was not without several of the same imperfections, although for other parts of painting he is so justly admired. Rubens had a finer imagination, more genius, and much nobler ideas in his characters; but Jordaens had better expression and more truth. He painted with extraordinary freedom, ease, and expedition; there is a brilliancy and harmony in his colouring, and a good understanding of the *chiaro-oscuro*; his composition is rich, his expression natural and strong, but his design wanted elegance and taste. He studied and copied nature, yet he neither selected its beauties nor rejected its defects. He knew how to give his figures a good relief, though he is frequently incorrect in the outlines; but his pencil is always excellent; and for a free and spirited touch, hardly any painter can be accounted his superior.

At Antwerp, Jordaens soon enjoyed immense popularity, a sort of fame he could scarcely fail to obtain in such a place. The fat Flemings recognised their king by the quality of the flesh. Long live Jordaens, Bacchus in the form of Hercules, and the Venus of the north! The Venus of Jordaens was Catherine Van Oort, whom he has painted in the greater part of his pictures, as Rubens painted Isabella Brandt or Helena Forman in his. Look at Catherine, blooming like a pomegranate burst by the heat of the sun, in the "Family Concert," and again behold her in that picture groaning with flesh called "Le Roi Boit," both which paintings one would imagine to have been placed in the Louvre for the express purpose of marking the difference that separates the realities of life from the falsehoods of painting. Here, she is seated on the right, holding a child; there, she is seen with a full face, in the middle, beneath the head of the "Fool of Antwerp," the elect one of the favourite models of Jordaens, and she is singing, or rather bawling, as loud as her lungs will allow her, with the joyful performers of this uproar, so improperly called a concert. See how well she looks in her splendid hair, how solidly her double chin is imbedded in her throat, how her neck runs into a bosom full of health and movement, and how stout her entire person is! And under whatever form Jordaens has introduced this home-spun and admired Venus—as bacchanalian, shepherdess, or queen—she is always in her place wherever he has put her, and has never consented to have the brilliancy of her skin or the size of her muscles diminished one jot; neither has she ever suppressed one wrinkle of her smiling mouth, nor ever in the last renounced the freshness of her colour. The wife of Jordaens stands up for her reputation like the wife of Cæsar.

Monsieur Thoré,—who reminds us, by his witticisms, of the finest and most impassioned tirades of Diderot,—exclaims, with his habitual animation, "It is remarkable how well the wives or mistresses of poets and painters always symbolise the character and style of the artists who have loved them. The verses of Horace and Ovid resemble Chloe and Julia. Dante is as mysterious as Beatrice. The paintings of Raffaele are as beautiful and noble as La Fornarina. Titian's Volante is all amber and robustness, like the colouring of the Venetians; and the talent of Albert Durer is angular and wayward, like the woman who rendered the great painter of Nuremberg so unhappy. Rubens is flowery, voluptuous, and magnificent,

like Isabella and Helena. Van Dyck is as elegant as his ladies of the court of England. Boucher is as affected as opera-dancers; Poussin is as grave as his mistress, philosophy; and Lesueur is as chaste as the nuns he adored in their convents, in a discreet and romantic manner. Tell me whom you love, and I will tell you who you are."

Jordaens liked freshness, fecundity, vividness, and energy. All his paintings are distinguished by these rare qualities. In six days he painted Pan and Syrinx, figures as large as life, in the midst of a dazzling landscape. This picture is one of his *chefs-d'œuvre*. His indefatigable hand was ever creating fresh images, and giving life to fresh figures. Rubens painted about three thousand pictures, of which nearly fifteen hundred have been engraved; and Teniers even executed as many as three hundred and fifty paintings in a single year. Jordaens was almost as prolific as these prodigious artists, and often finished a portrait or a figure of the size of life in one sitting.

His fortune, in consequence, increased with his fame, and he kept house in the sumptuous style of a nobleman. Breughel, Rubens, Van Dyck, and Teniers also enjoyed the privilege of living in palaces, in the midst of the luxury of civilisation, and surrounded by the master-pieces of art, the wonders of science, and all the comforts that riches can procure. Van Dyck, it is true, spent all his money in alchemy, and Teniers was ruined several times; but Jordaens, whose loyal and open character made his company universally sought after, and to whom Rubens had sworn fraternal friendship, lived all his life in the most delectable abundance, enjoying continued happiness that nothing ever troubled, and delighted with his dapple horses, which he painted with such fiery boldness, after having ridden them, or with his rich stuffs, in which he clothed his figures, after having worn them himself. From the year 1639 to the day of his death, he lived at Antwerp, in the house that forms the south-eastern corner of the Rue Renders.

At that time, artists lived together in untroubled friendship, each lending the other his special assistance, in order to render their works more perfect, though every one of those great men was quite capable of executing all styles of painting in the most accomplished manner. It was thus that the brilliant students of Italy had also behaved in the sixteenth century. Rubens has painted figures in the kitchens of Snyders, in the delicate landscapes of Breughel, and even in the middle of the latter's flower garlands. The Francks and the two Teniers have left their little figures in nearly all the paintings of their contemporaries.

This was likewise the case in Holland, where Berghem, Lingelback, Poelmburg, Adrian Van de Velde, Wouvermans, Cuyt, and many others, animated with figures the landscapes of Wynant, Vanderneer, Ruysdael, and even Hobbina, and the public places of Van der Heyden, or the interior of the churches of Steenwyck and Peter Neefs. Most of the Flemish painters of the seventeenth century have worked on the "original" *chefs-d'œuvre* of Rubens.

Besides assisting Rubens in several of his principal works, Jordaens very often painted with Snyders or John Fyt. The lusty servant girls of Jordaens matched admirably with the golden game and silvery fish of Snyders, or with his lobsters' grasping at the light with all their claws. The red hares, the pheasants, the ducks, the boars, and the hounds of Fyt, could find no better company than those hardy blowers on the horn whom Jordaens painted full of life and movement, as if to produce a noted contrast with the still-life of the Dutchman. Though always willing to lend his own aid to others, Jordaens himself never applied to any one for assistance in his own compositions, but always executed horses, dogs, cows, sheep, landscapes, and sky with his own hand. No other artist has fattened finer oxen than Jordaens has, nor bred more spirited or better built horses, and his panting dogs vie in perfection with the victorious hounds of Snyders.

In reference to the subject of the last two or three paragraphs, we may perhaps be allowed to wander a little from our immediate path. It has been asserted over and over again, by Desenfans and others, that "the professors of the

art of painting were subject to mutual jealousy," a fact, if it be one, not very creditable to artists or art; and it certainly did not apply to Jordaens. In a *catalogue raisonné* of his collection published by Desenfans, he insinuates that if painters wanted employment "it was not very surprising when men of talent had the weakness to depreciate each other." Mrs. Jameson undertakes to defend modern artists from the charge. "Desenfans," she says, "presumed to lament that there did not reign among painters that noble emulation which prevails in other liberal professions, particularly in the army, where officers and soldiers were always praising and mutually encouraging each other by reciprocal example." "All which," as Hamlet says, "though one may powerfully and potentially believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down." A shower of abuse in newspapers and anonymous letters was the consequence of this want of honesty,—or of *prudence*. Desenfans, in self-defence, quoted Dr. Johnson, who says, "It was once ingenuously confessed to me by a painter, that no professor of his art ever loved another. This declaration is so far justified by the knowledge of life, as to damp the hopes of warm and constant friendship between men whom their studies have made competitors, and whom every favourer and every censor are hourly inciting against each other."* But this apt quotation did not mend the matter; even the more respectable painters winced, and took umbrage. West was offended, because in some part of the catalogue Rubens was accused of envy towards Van Dyck and Jordaens. As this accusation, though not true in fact, and refuted by the whole life and character of Rubens, may be found in some early biographer, Desenfans might have sheltered himself under authority, but he had given personal offence, and was not to be pardoned.

In Jordaens' "Allegorical Triumph of Prince Frederick Henry of Nassau," now at the Hague, the white horses which are harnessed to the car are magnificent creatures. This triumph, of which there are a few sketches in the Belgian galleries, passes for one of the best paintings of Jordaens. It is certainly one of his grandest and most carefully-executed compositions. He had to celebrate his prince, as Rubens had celebrated his well-beloved queen, Marie de Médicis. While painting his "Triumph of Nassau," he, no doubt, borrowed from the magnificent treasures contained in the works of Rubens; but it can, at least, be said that the inspired disciple has equalled the master who inspired him. It is true, that the series of paintings illustrative of the life of Marie de Médicis holds a somewhat secondary rank in the works of Rubens, with the exception, however, of a few pieces, which are indeed capital performances.

Those who wish to see all the qualities of Jordaens assembled in the height of their splendour, must visit his "Jesus driving the Money-changers out of the Temple," which shines resplendent in the Louvre; the canvas, which is thirteen feet wide and nine high, is so full that it seems ready to burst: a little to the right, is Jesus, surrounded by men and women, oxen and sheep; in the middle and on the left, are colossal male and female figures running away, with their goods upon their heads and their baskets under their arms; among the crowd is a burly woman with a straw hat on, and she alone seems to weigh as much as all the other figures in the painting. In the foreground, is the figure of a man, foreshortened and falling forward in such a way as to somewhat alarm the spectator when he is beneath the picture. In the background, are the two scribes of the money-changers—two enormous Israelites, full of force and health, like all the others. On the left, between the pillars, are figures looking on. Above and below, to the right and left—in a word, everywhere—are seen people, movement, and colour.

* Dr. Johnson goes on to say that "The utmost expectation experience can warrant is, that they should forbear open hostilities and secret machinations, and thus when the whole fraternity is attacked be able to unite against a common enemy." The last acute observation will serve to illustrate the rest of the story. The painter above alluded to was Sir Joshua Reynolds.—*Rambler*, No. 64.

Barry, in his "History of Painting," speaks somewhat slightly of the Flemish school. "The artists of the Low Countries, have," he declares, "deviated widely from all the sources of elegance, pathos, and sublimity; induced not only by that sordid disposition, which will ever be epidemic in a country so generally devoted to gain, but still further, from the differences of religion, they had accustomed themselves to look with ridicule and buffoonery on those great subjects, which the Italians executed with the utmost possible sobriety and unction. Although the Hollanders in this procedure ultimately disqualified themselves for serious pursuits in the arts, yet as the human capacity is seldom disappointed, when it will perseveringly apply, I shall, under the divisions of my subject in the subsequent discourses, have occasion to advert to many excellences, which might be studied with great

the tints, and the depth of the tones. Let him beware of being captivated by the ostentatious splendour of the Venetian and Flemish schools; the terrors of the Crucifixion must not be lost in the magnificent pomp of a triumphal show, nor the pathetic solemnity of the Last Supper be disturbed by the impertinent gaiety of a bacchanalian revel. This is abhorrent to true taste; nor shall the authors of such mockeries escape censure, however great their powers or celebrated their names."

"Le Roi Boit," or in English, "Twelfth-Night," which has been reproduced by the burin of several engravers, foremost among whom comes Paul Pontius, whose engraving of it forms his *chef-d'œuvre*, is a composition full of life and light. In it are seen, besides his wife, the heads of most of the persons who were dear to Jordaens. There exist several



THE REPAST; SOMETIMES CALLED THE FAMILY CONCERT.—JACOB JORDAENS.

profit in the works of some distinguished characters in the Dutch school."

Again, speaking of colour as an element of success, he says, "that one seldom finds an ill-coloured picture in the Dutch school; the little more or the little less in the drawing could make no difference worth attending to, where they regarded not so much the beauty or perfection of the human form, as the contrary: it was not easy to err in the drawing and composition of works formed out of trite, vulgar, slattern matter, level to the meanest and most mechanical capacity."

And Opie, in his lectures, so far from dissenting from his brother R. A., in his depreciation of the Flemish school of painters, cautions the student against "that vulgar error, the mistaking fine colours for fine colouring, which consists, not in the gaudiness, but the truth, harmony, and transparency of

transplendent drawings of these two paintings. The drawings of Jordaens are generally very vigorous water-colours, sketched in black and red chalk, washed with every colour, relieved with white, and even with other tones in oil. They generally fetch a pretty good price, on account of their beauty and importance, and, relatively speaking, a higher one than the artist's large paintings, of which, in fact, they supply the place; but the heads in them are heavy, incorrect, and of a common type. Their composition, however, is, on the whole, grand and admirably effective. The Louvre possesses several of these drawings, in the execution of some of which Jordaens employed the pen.

Jordaens himself, following the example of other great painters, has left some etchings executed by his own hand. They consist of eight plates, namely, "The Flight into

Egypt;" "Jesus driving the Money-changers out of the Temple;" a "Descent from the Cross;" "Mercury decapitating Argus;" "Jupiter stopping Io;" "The Infant Jupiter fed by the Goat Amalthæa;" "A Peasant stopping an Ox by the Tail, with several Spectators;" and "Saturn on the Clouds, devouring one of his Children." The last plate is very scarce.

These prints are not much sought after, for at the Rigal sale, in 1817, the whole collection, with the exception of "Saturn," only fetched the insignificant sum of 3s. 4d.

Jordaens excelled in portraits, as he did in allegories, religious and mythological pieces, or fancy subjects. Yet his manner, which is not, perhaps, fitted for elevated subjects, is better suited to portrait-painting, which requires, above all, close study of nature. With respect to mythology and Christian tradition, Jordaens is quite at home, as is proved by his pictures of Silenus, his satyrs, his paintings of the heifer, Io, his bacchanals, his nativities, his adorations of the shep-

Angelo, Titian, and Jordaens, for whom art is a second life, cease to paint and live but on the day of their death.

Jordaens had had the misfortune to lose Catherine Oort in 1659, from which time he lost something of his vigorous style, and, nineteen years after, he himself died on the 18th of October, 1678, at the age of 85. His beloved daughter, Anne Catherine, also died on the same day as her father. They were both interred in the Protestant church of the seigniory of Putten, a village situated on the frontiers of the United Provinces, where the great Flemish painter's tombstone—which William II., King of the Netherlands, has restored some years ago—may still be seen. Who would have believed that Jordaens, the great picture-drawer, was a Protestant? Born a Catholic, he, some time after his marriage, adhered, with his father-in-law, to the reformed religion—that religion which was indifferent, or rather hostile, to the ceremonies of outward worship and to all signification of form.

In speaking of Jordaens, De Piles says, "All he lacked was



THE REPAST; ANOTHER TREATMENT.

herds, &c.; but do not seek for Jordaens in the regions of refinement and mysticism. As for his portraits, the Dutch mariners were made expressly for him, and reality is his. He never hesitated to introduce into his paintings their large, ruddy cheeks, to make their inflamed eyes sparkle there, and to envelop them in the ample folds of their large rough cloaks.

After the death of Rubens and Van Dyck, the former of whom died in 1640, and the latter in 1641, Jordaens had no rivals at Antwerp. At that time, he had scarcely run half through his career. Innumerable are the pictures executed by him at this epoch. All the princes of Germany, all the wealthy people of the Netherlands, every mansion and every church, strove to obtain the paintings of Jordaens. Carried on by his temperament and quickness of execution, he dashed off his gigantic figures wholesale, and, without the least fatigue, spread his vigorous colouring over whole acres of canvas, throwing his treasures profusely about, and this even after he had grown old. Real artists, like Michael

to have seen Italy." That was what he lacked, it is true; but we ought rather to say, "Luckily, he never saw Italy." There are certain painters whom Italy never profits, and whose natural originality, when it is as powerful as that of Jordaens, is far preferable, even with all its defects, to forced science and borrowed correctness, which, as a natural consequence, cannot fail of becoming both affected and false. In support of what we have just said, we will beg permission to quote the opinion of a very intelligent man, who cannot possibly be accused of partiality for Jordaens; we mean the classic Taillasson. He compares the regret expressed by De Piles, with respect to Jordaens and Italy, to those commonplace remarks which are incessantly being repeated, and which remind you of those general remedies which are to cure every disease. "Italy," says he, "would have doubtless given a better form to the outline of the drawings of Jordaens, but she would not have increased the elevation or nobleness of his genius: she might perhaps have turned him more from the style for which

he was born; nature had organised him for feeling deeply, for expressing common truths faithfully, and for representing trivial and laughable things, which he rendered with perfectly original accuracy and force. Nobody has equalled him in painting those rubicund faces of his, loaded with masses of flesh, through which the spectator fancies he sees beer, wine, blood, and brandy all circulating together. De Piles would have been much more right in saying, 'What an extraordinary man Jordaens would have been, if, instead of painting classical pieces and subjects of heroic history, he had confined himself to pictures of the style of "Le Roi Boit,"' a subject in which he was so much at home, that he has painted it in several different ways." We, in our turn, also say that it is better to be Jacob Jordaens of Antwerp, Jordaens the Fleming—incurable, incorruptible, entire—than an unnaturalised fugitive, re-baptised by the Italians, who would not have failed to call Jacob Jordaens *Jacopo Giordano*. A wit has said that a man is only some one, on condition that he is no one else.

Two of the engravings we have introduced to illustrate this master, show how differently the same subject may be treated even by the same hand. Jordaens, like many of the modern painters, was in the habit of making duplicate copies of some of his favourite pieces; and it would appear from the evidence of the pictures themselves that he occasionally varied his style of treatment, to suit the wishes of his patrons—at least the two copies of the "Repast" would suggest this notion. The two pictures are varied in title as well as treatment—the one is simply called "The Repast," the other is named after an old Flemish proverb, "As the old cock crows the young ones learn," in allusion to the imitation by the children of the elders' music. "To find excellences and discover beauties," says Sir Joshua Reynolds in one of his discourses, "can be the work only of him, who having a mind always alive to his art, has extended his views to all ages and to all schools: and has acquired from that comprehensive mass which he has thus gathered to himself, a well-digested and perfect idea of his art, to which every thing is referred. Like a sovereign judge and arbiter of art, he is possessed of that presiding power which separates and attracts every excellence from every school; selects both from what is great, and what is little: brings home knowledge from the east and from the west; making the universe tributary towards furnishing his mind, and enriching his works with originality and variety of inventions." Thus, and in a like spirit, to discover defects requires a feeling for art which is only the property of an artist.

In the style of picture called "Breakfast Pieces,"—of which "The Repast" is a notable example,—Jordaens is conspicuous. In these pictures costly cups and ewers, beautiful glass with sparkling wine, the most inviting pâtés, juicy fruits, lobsters, crabs, and glittering oysters, are formed into an agreeable whole; all the solid mid-day dainties which the old masters had enjoyed with one or the other of their boon companions, are embodied for the latest posterity as examples of their good taste in eating. Among the names of the artists who distinguished themselves in these works of "still life," are Adriaenssen, Peter Nason, Wm. van Aelst, Vigor van Heeda, and Th. Apshoven, all of whom flourished in the second half of the seventeenth century. The galleries of Berlin, Dresden, and Vienna are rich in their works.

In Germany and the Low Countries, says Franz Kugler, speaking of the revival of art in the seventeenth century—traditional types and ancient habits existed side by side with all the results of the new struggles made by the human mind in the sixteenth century, but these two elements had not been reconciled and blended with each other before the time that the highest perfection of art in Italy had passed away.

The case was the same on both sides of the Alps—neither the mannered imitators of the great Italian masters in Italy, nor the northern artists who devoted themselves to the study of Italian art in the course of the sixteenth century, could do more than seize the mere external characteristics of their models. This substitution of the outward shell for the real

essence of art, showed itself just at the time when the groundwork of old religious feeling had been struck away, and when confusion in creeds, clamour for Church reform, and struggles for bodily and mental freedom, had produced a state of things which could not be favourable to the fine arts. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, however, these elements of disturbance had at least in part subsided, and a new ground was prepared for the progress of the human intellect. In Italy, these circumstances caused a sort of revival of art and produced a close academical imitation of the older masters, together with a vigorous and somewhat rude "naturalism." No new principle, however, of grandeur or of deep feeling had shown itself. The result was different in the North and in the Low Countries; the termination of the contest with Spain allowed elements of national life, at once vigorous and healthful, to develop themselves freely.

In the works of the artists of the Netherlands of the seventeenth century, we recognise a revival of art in an original, and, on the whole, in a most attractive form. There is not, indeed, any aspiration after the pure beauty of ideal form, and after that feeling which is the highest in its kind, and the most universal in its effect; but as regards breadth, freedom, and originality of treatment, united with a due attention to individual objects, much that was new and important was secured in this school. The peculiar character of individual life, with its singularities, its interests, and its passions; the daily intercourse of men with each other in all its variety; Nature, in all the freedom of her every day works and operations; the expression of a happy tone of mind, in the play of light and colour; and finally, a delicacy of execution, which, without any claim to profound meaning and consequently without pretension, at least delights the eye with its bright images;—all these elements of art were now developed in the richest profusion.

From the time of Jordaens, however, but small advance has been made in art by Flemish painters. With some few exceptions, the Low Countries have produced no masters of the brush and palette since the year 1700. The artists of Belgium—and here again we quote from Kugler—have followed the example of those of France, and have fallen into the same feeble mannerism which distinguished the latter during the greater part of the last century. In the second half of this period, however, Andrew Lens, of Ghent, is sometimes distinguished by a feeling of greater tenderness, and deserves to be remarked as an artist, in spite of all his conventional stiffness. The Annunciation in St. Michael's Church, Ghent, is one of his works. At the close of the century, the Belgian artists in like manner followed David, among whose scholars Joseph Paelinck, of Ghent, must be mentioned. At present the Belgian artists appear to be subject to the influence of the romantic school of France, one of whose most zealous and spirited adherents is to be found in Wappers, of Brussels.

The artists of Holland, on the contrary, have lately taken the path of their forefathers of the seventeenth century, and have followed it out with peculiar success. They are distinguished by the same spirited and faithful imitation of nature, the same truth and life, and these qualities give a character of completeness to the greater number of their works. This particularly applies to their landscapes, among which those of Koekoek, Schelfhout, and Schotel (the works of the last are sea-pieces), have gained a high reputation. In landscape and genre scenes, Moerenhout also is distinguished by a handling as soft as it is spirited. In historical painting, Eeckhout the younger deserves notice; he, like the older artist of the same name, has imitated Rembrandt with tolerable success.

The signature of Jordaens is found on none of his pictures, with the exception of the allegorical painting of "Human Law based on Divine Law," which is in the museum at Antwerp, and at the bottom of which he has stated in a long inscription, which he has signed in Roman letters, that he made a donation of this painting to the brotherhood of St. Luke.

Like Rubens, Jordaens had the pleasure of seeing his compositions reproduced during his life-time by the burin of the

most celebrated engravers of his time. Unfortunately, we at present only possess twenty-three of them, but then they are all so many *chefs-d'œuvre*. Bolswert never executed finer engravings than those of the "Infant Jupiter suckled by the Satyrs," "Pan playing on a Flute," the "Concert," entitled "Soo d'oude songen, soo pepen de Jongen," or "A Faun holding a basket of Fruit, with Ceres behind him." Paul Pontius never succeeded better in anything than in "Le Roi Boit." The "Martyrdom of St. Apollonia," by Marinus, is a splendid engraving. The "Nativity," and "St. Martin de Tours," by Peter Jode the younger, are also magnificent works; and "Jupiter and Mercury, with Baucis and Philemon," by Nicholas Lauwers, ranks with the finest of this artist's productions. And last, though not least, in the list which our space permits us to make, "The Fable of the Satyr with the Peasant who blows hot and cold," has been admirably engraved by Vorsterman the elder. The last subject has also been engraved by Vorsterman the younger. All these prints fetch very high prices. As early as the Mariette sale, in 1775, "Le Roi Boit" was sold for £5 17s. 6d., and the "Faun holding a Basket," with its companion, representing "Persons singing," for £7 19s. 2d.

The case-pieces of Jordaens are very scarce, but are sometimes to be met with at public sales. The prices they have fetched vary, as far as our researches permit us to say, from £6 to nearly £400 sterling.

Almost all the public galleries of Europe contain paintings by Jordaens; but those of Belgium, and especially the churches of that country, are filled with this master's productions.

In the National Gallery we have a "Holy Family" of Jordaens, a picture which is remarkable as possessing few of the characteristics of the painter beyond the splendid colouring of the Virgin's robe and some beautiful painting about the head of Joseph. Indeed Mrs. Jameson declares it to be vulgar in conception, and without merit of any kind. At Hampton Court there is a fine painting called "The Overthrow of Pharaoh in the Red Sea," in which the traces of the Rubens school of painting are evident enough; and in the Dulwich Gallery there is a good sketch of Jordaens' famous "Blowing Hot and Cold," a miniature engraving of which is given under the portrait at the head of this article. The original picture is in the Gallery at Munich, and is a fine large specimen—perhaps the best in existence—of the peculiarities of this master. It would appear that the subject has been frequently painted, or, at any rate, sketched, for, by reference to Vosterman's engraving of the Munich picture, a great difference of treatment will be at once perceived. In the collection of the Duke of Devonshire, at Devonshire House, Chiswick, there is a portrait subject representing Frederick Prince of Orange and his consort. The figures are in full length, and are painted with much feeling for nature—the flesh not having that glassy and transparent appearance noticeable in many of Jordaens' works. There is also a brilliant and perfect copy of the "Twelfth Night," undoubtedly from the hand of Jordaens, and another portrait by the same master in the Chiswick Gallery. A genuine, but by no means excellent, "Holy Family" is in the possession of the Duke of Northumberland; and a "Mercury and Argus," very hot and glowing, with landscape and cattle in the Rubens style, is at Alton Tower, the seat of the Earl of Shrewsbury. The Marquis of Bute, in his collection at Luton House, Bedfordshire, has a couple of fine paintings by Jordaens—"Pan between Two Nymphs," and a "Girl with Fruit,"—both of which may be esteemed good specimens of the Flemish artist's manner; beside which there are many doubtful pictures in the hands of private persons in England. In the sales of pictures continually taking place in London, a tolerably executed Jordaens occasionally turns up, but it seldom reaches a high price. The works of this artist are not, however, among those which are reproduced in the private manufactories of London and Paris, "with all the marks of age upon them."

The Louvre contains several paintings by Jordaens, and among them is a "Jesus driving the Money-changers out of the Temple," valued at £1,440. Vienna, Dresden, Munich,

the Hague, St. Petersburg, and Madrid, all possess paintings by Jordaens; but, as we have already said, most of this master's works are to be found in Belgium.

The consideration of the works of Jordaens naturally leads to a review of the state of arts in Flanders. In the year 1781, Sir Joshua Reynolds, accompanied by Philip Metcalf, Esq., made a tour through the Low Countries, with a view to a more perfect examination of the paintings existing in the various galleries and private collections of the Dutch. For this purpose the painter successively visited the cities of Bruges, Ghent, Brussels, Mechlin, Antwerp, the Hague, and Amsterdam, looking also with a critical eye through the Dusseldorf gallery, and the collections at Cologne, Aix-la-Chapelle, Liege, and Louvain. Of his impressions during that tour Sir Joshua has left us a very full and interesting account, in which the characteristics of the Dutch and Flemish schools of painters are clearly defined and kindly criticised, and their peculiar excellences described. "One would wish to be able," he says, "to convey to the reader some idea of that excellence, the sight of which has afforded so much pleasure; but as their merit often consists in the truth of representation alone, whatever praise they deserve, whatever pleasure they give when under the eye, they make but a poor figure in description. It is to the eye only that the works of this school are addressed; it is not therefore to be wondered at, that what was intended solely for the gratification of one sense, succeeds but ill when applied to another.

"A market-woman with a hare in her hand, a man blowing a trumpet, or a boy blowing bubbles, a view of the inside or outside of a church, are the subjects of some of their most valuable pictures; but there is still entertainment even in such pictures; however uninteresting their subjects, there is some pleasure in the contemplation of the truth of the imitation. But to a painter they afford likewise instruction in his profession; here he may learn the art of colouring and composition, a skilful management of light and shade, and indeed all the mechanical parts of the art, as well as in any other school whatever. The same skill which is practised by Rubens and Titian in their large works, is here exhibited, though on a smaller scale. Painters should go to the Dutch school to learn the art of painting, as they would go to a grammar school to learn languages. They must go to Italy to learn the higher branches of knowledge.

"We must be contented to make up our idea of perfection from the excellences which are dispersed over the world. A poetical imagination, expression, character, or even correctness of drawing, are seldom united with that power of colouring, which would set off those excellences to the best advantage; and in this, perhaps, no school ever excelled the Dutch. An artist, by a close examination of their works, may in a few hours make himself master of the principles on which they wrought, which cost them whole ages, and perhaps the experience of a succession of ages, to ascertain.

"The most considerable of the Dutch school are, Rembrandt, Teniers, Jan Steen, Ostade, Brouwer, Gerard Dow, Micris, Metzu, and Terburg; these excel in small conversations. For landscapes and cattle, Wouvermans, Paul Potter, Berchem, and Ruysdael; and for buildings, Vanderheyden. For sea views, W. Vandervelde, jun., and Backhuysen. For dead game, Weenix and Hondekoeter. For flowers, De Heem, Vanhuysum, Rachael Roos, and Brueghel. These make the bulk of the Dutch school.

"I consider those painters as belonging to this school, who painted only small conversations, landscapes, &c. Though some of those were born in Flanders, their works are principally found in Holland; and to separate them from the Flemish school, which generally painted figures large as life, it appears to me more reasonable to class them with the Dutch painters, and to distinguish those two schools rather by their style and manner, than by the place where the artist happened to be born.

"Rembrandt may be considered as belonging to both or either, as he painted both large and small pictures.

"The works of David Teniers, jun., are worthy the closest attention of a painter who desires to excel in the mechanical knowledge of his art. His manner of touching, or what we

"Jan Steen has a strong manly style of painting, which might become even the design of Raphael, and he has shown the greatest skill in composition, and management of light



THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. APOLLONIA.—BY JACOB JORDAENS.

call handling, has perhaps never been equalled: there is in his pictures that exact mixture of softness and sharpness which is difficult to execute.

and shadow, as well as great truth in the expression and character of his figures.

"The landscapes of Ruysdael have not only great force

but have a freshness which is seen in scarce any other painter. What excellence in colour and handling is to be found in the dead game of Weeninx!

would make no improper part of a painter's study. Rubens' pictures strongly remind one of a nosegay of flowers, where all the colours are bright, clear, and transparent.



THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS. BY PETER PAUL RUBENS. ANTWERP CATHEDRAL.

"A clearness and brilliancy of colouring may be learned by examining the flower pieces of De Heem, Huysum, and Mignon; and a short time employed in painting flowers,

"I have only to add, that in my account of the Dutch pictures, which is indeed little more than a catalogue, I have mentioned only those which I considered worthy of attention."